

## **WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK AUGUST 1-7!**

"**B**reastfeeding in a Globalized World" will be the theme of the thirteenth annual

World Breastfeeding Week celebrated from August 1-7, 2003. This celebration is part of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action's (WABA) ongoing campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of breastfeeding for both mothers and their infants.

The national goal is to increase to at least 75% the portion of mothers who initiate breastfeeding and to increase to at least 50% the proportion who continue to breastfeed until their infants are at least six months old. As of 2000, only 60% of all hospital-born infants were receiving breastmilk at the time of discharge and only 15% were still breastfeeding at six months of age.

In 1997, The American Academy of Pediatrics identified breastfeeding "...as the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants and recognized breastfeeding as primary in achieving optimal infant and child health, growth, and development." The Academy recommends the use of human milk as the only food source for infants during the first six months of life and at least through the second half of the first year with the addition of solid foods.

The research clearly shows that human milk is far superior to any formula and that the entire process of breastfeeding is a way to save lives, reduce illness, and protect our environment. The primary goal of the campaign is to increase the awareness that human breastmilk is the best nutrition for babies during the first six months of life; while the second goal is to assure the public that breastfeeding is normal, desirable, and achievable.

Here in Sigonella, World Breastfeeding Week will be celebrated with poster displays in the Acute Care Clinic waiting area of the Naval Hospital, as well as the NAS 1 Commissary. Look for the informative poster displays and handouts.

### **Benefits to Infants:**

- Decreases incidence and/or severity of: diarrhea, respiratory infections, ear infections, bacterial meningitis, and urinary tract infections.
- Protects against: diabetes mellitus, certain childhood cancers, food allergies, eczema, and diseases of the colon.
- Enhances optimal brain and visual development.

**Benefits to Mothers:**

- Improves post delivery weight loss.
- Diminishes post delivery blood loss.
- Reduces risk of ovarian, endometrial, and breast cancers.
- Decreases risk of brittle bones (osteoporosis) in later life.

**Benefits to Families**

- Saves \$1000-\$1200 per year in the cost of formula.

**Benefits to Society**

- A healthier population!
- Decreases the need for health care, thereby saving healthcare dollars.
- Eliminates formula can and container waste from landfills.
- Removes the need to use energy for the marketing and production of formulas.

Our monthly breastfeeding class is offered the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Flight Line Clinic from 1615-1800. Please call x4769 for more information or to sign up.

**BREASTFEED BABIES ARE HEALTHIER BABIES!**